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ABSTRACT

The Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center was established in 1989 to help Green Bay, Wisconsin, community members and tribal employees develop individual career and educational plans and receive the instruction and related services required to pursue those plans. During a workplace literacy project conducted from June 1993 through June 1995, the center offered workplace literacy instruction to 96 retail division cashiers at 6 stores. Forty-eight retail employees took advantage of the program and participated in learning modules/workshops on such topics as mathematics, keyboarding, reading, interpersonal skills, retail education needs, leadership, self-esteem, walking in two worlds, maintaining a drug-free workplace, and speed reading. Each of following services was also provided to between 4 and 48 participants: self-evaluation, testing, career assessment, child care, and transportation. An evaluation of the workplace literacy project established that it had tremendous potential but experienced limitations in both design and cooperation among the parties involved. Staff dedication to project participants was identified as the project's greatest strength. Lack of coordination and program objectives that could not be realistically pursued within the project's time frame (including the achievement of passing scores on General Educational Development Tests and job advancement) were deemed its main weaknesses. (MN)

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ED 385 770

PROJECT EVALUATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NATIONAL WORKPLACE LITERACY AWARD # V198430009

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center's Workplace Literacy Program is an eighteen-month project that began in June, 1993 and was scheduled to terminate in November, 1994. An extension has been awarded through June 30, 1995. This document is to be considered the final evaluation report. Instruments used to conduct this evaluation include: interview of program staff; interview of program participants, interview of ad hoc committee members; and assessment of program objectives and activities. It is composed of statistical information gathered from project records and personal perceptions and insight gathered from project participants, staff, and ad hoc committee members.

The purpose of this evaluation is to collect information about the project for the funding source, the U.S. Department of Education, as well as provide valuable feedback for project staff; thereby, assisting the decision-making process regarding future funding requests and administration procedures for this and other projects. Criteria utilized throughout this evaluation consistently incorporated and stressed the appropriateness of the project's literacy objectives for employees of the Oneida Retail Division.

This evaluation contains four (4) segments, they are: **Project administration and staff; project facilities; instruction and services provided; and project objectives.** Each area is addressed individually. The evaluator's conclusion and recommendations for the project are included in this report.

II. PROJECT EVALUATION

A. Project Administration and Staff

The Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center has an established philosophy and goal for guiding program operations. This is stated in the Center's Mission Statement:

> **"The mission of the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center is to assist community members and tribal employees in developing individual career and educational plans by assessing their interests, values, aptitudes and past experience. The Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center will provide educational opportunities and work experiences to further develop the individual's skills. It will address the total person by assisting each individual in assuming their rights and responsibilities as both tribal members and employees as well as members of the greater community.**

The Workplace Literacy Project administration is consistent with the Center's Mission Statement. There is a strong commitment by staff members to the project participants. While the project suffered initially from staff turnover at the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center and St. Norbert College, it is this evaluator's opinion that the staff are professionals who have adequately met the needs of the participants.

The current project Coordinator/Counselor and the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center Director, Mary Pat Cuney-Farrell, has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology, with a minor in American History. She further has a Master of Arts degree in Indian History, with a minor in Education. She has been Director of the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center since November, 1989. Ms. Cuney-Farrell is a

Wisconsin member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Advisory Committee. She is well qualified for the position she holds as the Director of the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center. She demonstrates an excellent understanding of the unique needs of the Native American Learner.

Mr. Paul Hockers has been responsible for managing the budget of this project. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Management, minor in Transportation, and a Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance. While his areas of expertise are not in education, he is an efficient budget manager who relies on the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center staff in matters of educational emphasis.

Other key project staff members are Mr. Don Drewiske, Ms. Dorothy Liska and Ms. Kim Allen. Mr. Drewiske holds a Master of Arts Degree in Biology and is secondary education certified by the State of Wisconsin. Ms. Liska holds a Bachelor of Science degree and is also secondary education certified by the State of Wisconsin. Ms. Allen holds a Bachelor of Arts, is Wisconsin secondary certified, and is working on her Master of Science in Education. Ms. Liska's, Ms. Allen's and Mr. Drewiske's education credentials, along with Mr. Hockers business credentials, and Ms. Cuney-Farrell's credentials and experience in Indian education complete the requirements for effective project administration.

Project staffing experienced difficulties. Ms. Lynn Piwonski was

originally hired to fill the position of Project Coordinator/Counselor. While she was well qualified to manage the educational aspect of workplace literacy, she had difficulty managing a project of this size with a budget of $343,830 over an 18-month period. Consequently, Ms. Piwonski left the program in June, 1994 and Mr. Hockers requested an extension of seven months in order to meet the project goals.

St. Norbert College collaborated extensively on project development and in writing the proposal. However, between the time the proposal was written and funding was secured, those at St. Norbert College involved with this project had relocated. A new staff, with less understanding of, and commitment to, the project had difficulty following through with St. Norbert's original obligation. According to instructors at the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center, staff at St. Norbert College had to be reminded often of their commitment. However, the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training staff were diligent.

B. Project Facilities

As originally conceived, the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center and St. Norbert College were available to project participants. As stated earlier, St. Norbert fell behind in its commitment to provide training and workshops. Basic skill assistance and workshops are still provided at the new Oneida Development and Technical Training Center site. This building provides classroom space, office space, a conference room, a computer lab,

and student support areas. The Career Center is a clean, open and inviting facility.. It provides barrier-free access. A confidential environment provides security to the returning adult student.

C. Instruction and Services Provided

Following is a summary of the instruction and services provided during the duration of the Workplace Literacy Project. They were offered to a total of 96 Retail Division cashiers at six stores during the term of the grant. Forty-eight (48) Retail Division employees took advantage of the program.

Instruction	Number of Participants
Module I - Mathematics	9
Module II - Keyboarding	17
Module III - Reading	4
Interpersonal Skills Workshop	31
Retail Education Needs Workshop	31
Leadership Workshop	40
Self-Esteem (I) Workshop	34
Communications Skills Workshop	37
Walking in Two Worlds Workshop	19
Myers-Briggs Workshop	21
Better Teams Workshop	29
Drug-Free Workplace Workshop	31
Self-Esteem (II) Workshop	18
Cash Register/Elan Swipe Workshop	19
Evelyn Woods Speed Reading Workshop	24

Services	Number of Participants
Self-Evaluation	26
TABE Testing	25
Career Assessments	38
Child Care	4
Transportation	48

D. Project Objectives

As originally written, the Workplace Literacy Project was to meet the following seven objectives over the project period:

1. 75% of participants will increase reading comprehension scores on standardized tests by 20 percentile points within four months of entry into the communications course.

2. 75% of participants will be judged able to write appropriate short memos and reports within four months of entry into the communications course.

3. 75% of participants will increase mathematics scores on standardized tests by 30 percentile points within four months of entry into the mathematics course.

4. 80% of participants enrolled in GED preparation will receive a passing score on the GED within six months of entry into the high school equivalency program class.

5. Retention of employees and advancement to positions outside of the retail division will be 50% greater among program participants within 8 months of participants' entry into the program.

6. Participants average job performance rating will be 25% greater than those of non-participants within 8 months of entry into the program.

7. Advancement of participants within the retail division will be 100% greater in frequency than advancement of non-participants within 8 months of entry into the program.

On September 15, 1993, the Workplace Literacy Project Coordinator, Lynn Piwonski, requested, and was granted, a change in the project objectives. It was felt that some of the objectives contained "unrealistic percentile points, time frames, passing scores for the GED, and advancement rates within the retail division." A letter written by Ms. Piwonski to the U.S. Department of

Education identified the need as follows:

> "The justification for these changes results from the assessments that were given to community members in July of 1992. The average numerical ability score was 4.0, the average verbal reasoning score was 3.5 and the average language usage score was 3.7. These low scores and limited class time indicate that it will take more time to successfully complete the objectives stated. The GED requirements are especially rigorous, and therefore, will take more than 6 months to successfully complete. However, it is felt that if concentrated effort were placed on one area, a passing score on 1 or more of the 5 GED tests would be obtainable."

The objectives were altered, therefore, to meet the following criteria:

1. 75% of participants will increase reading comprehension scores on standardized tests by **10** percentile points within **four-six** months of entry into the communications course.

2. 75% of participants will be judged able to write appropriate short memos and reports within **four-six** months of entry into the communications course.

3. 75% of participants will increase mathematics scores on standardized tests by **10** percentile points within four months of entry into the mathematics course.

4. 80% of participants enrolled in GED preparation will receive a passing score on **one or more of the five GED tests** within six months of entry into the high school equivalency program class.

5. Retention of employees and advancement to positions outside of the retail division will be 50% greater among program participants within 8 months of participants' entry into the program.

6. Participants average job performance rating will be 25% greater than those of non-participants within 8 months of entry into the program.

7. Advancement of participants within the retail division will be **50%** greater in frequency than advancement of non-participants within **12** months of participant entry into participant status.

Those items highlighted in bold reflect the changes made to the objectives.

While the project has been able to address workplace literacy needs, it has had difficulty meeting some of the objectives as they were written. Data has not been gathered to determine whether or not these objectives have been met. Primarily, there are two reasons. One, some of the objectives, as written, contain too many measurable criteria. For example, in order to meet objective 1, the three measurable criteria (75% of participants; 10 percentile points; four-six months) must all be measured and attained. If the project falls short of even one of the three criteria in that objective, the objective has not been met as written. Two, there has not been good coordination among those involved in the Project (The Career Center, the Retail Division, and St. Norbert's College).

Objectives 1 and 3 require regular testing of participants in order to get data to determine if these objectives are being met. The project lost participants in the beginning because there was too much testing and the instructors stopped emphasizing this component. There is, therefore, no data to determine whether or not those served by the project increase reading comprehension and mathematics scores.

Objective 2 was also not documented. There were no guidelines set up do judge whether or not participants were able to write appropriate short memos and reports.

Objective 4 was measured and met. Seventeen individuals enrolled in the GED component of the Workplace Literacy Program. Of those 17, 10 (59%) completed their GED/HSED and 14 (82%) passed one or more tests or successfully completed more than half of the 5.09 Competency-based HSED Program.

Objectives 5, 6, and 7 are dependent on data gathered by the Retail Division Manager. On August 16, 1995, an interview with Ms. Lois Strong, Area Manager of the Retail Division and two Retail Division staff members, Scott Denny, Systems Control Specialist, and Diane Hill, Education Training Specialist, revealed that thirty-two (32) participants (67%) either advanced to better positions within the Retail Division or moved on to better positions outside the Retail Divisions. A move outside the Retail Division most often remained within the tribal operations. Examples of advancement include, Retail Division assistant manager and manager, security person, gaming supervisor, payroll clerk, project manager, clerical, and foster care coordinator. Several cashiers left their positions to pursue a college degree. For purposes of this survey, this evaluator considered the pursuit of a higher education degree an advancement and included those individuals in the thirty-two participants cited above.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Workplace Literacy Program had tremendous potential but experienced limitations in both design and cooperation among entities involved.

This conclusion will address the strengths and weaknesses of the project and make recommendations to the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center and the U.S. Department of Education regarding future projects of this kind.

A. Project Strengths

The Workplace Literacy Project's greatest strengths is the staff dedication to project participants. The instructors are all warm, caring and approachable. This is essential for the type of adult population this project served. The experience and dedication of the Oneida Career Center staff was an asset. This evaluator strongly recommends the Oneida Career Development and Technical Training Center continue its efforts in the area of workplace literacy.

B. Project Weaknesses

The project suffered from the lack of coordination among the involved parties. Those who designed the project did not implement it. The academic objectives were not realistic for the population this project was serving. Those who implemented the project (the Career Center staff) understood this and worked to overcome it. Additionally, the Oneida Retail Division could have been more supportive if they had had a clearer understanding of the direct benefits from the Workplace Literacy Project. Mandating the training without some initial public relations work caused an attitude problem among some Retail Division employees that became contagious. Those interviewed at the

Retail Division felt this project would have been more effective if it had a component for store managers as well as cashiers. They also felt the title, "Workplace Literacy," was sometimes threatening and demeaning to those being served. There was, therefore, not a smooth implementation of the project.

Eighteen months is not long enough for a project of this type. The population being served is initially hesitant to return to an academic environment that has, in most cases, not been a positive experience. The need to spend considerable time recruiting participants and then providing one very small positive experience at a time demands a longer project time frame within which to work. A longer project would have provided more stability. Most staff interviewed recommended at least a six-month planning and start-up period. This evaluator agrees with that recommendation and would further suggest that a project of this magnitude be granted no less than a three-year funding period.